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Cinematic Arts Newsletter

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Letter from the Chair

Michael Cowan

Dear Friends of Cinematic Arts,

Welcome to the sixth installment of the Cinematic Arts Newsletter, begun in 2016. I'm particularly excited to write this introduction as the new chair of the Department of Cinematic Arts and to share all of the achievements that continue to make our department such an exciting place to work and study! I also want to send a special thanks to the outgoing chair, Professor Paula Amad, for her tireless dedication to the department. Despite the immense challenges of COVID-19, Professor Amad helped to make 2020-2021 a particularly rich and eventful academic year, and one that exemplifies the spirit of artistic and scholarly collaboration that makes Cinematic Arts so unique among university film departments.

Perhaps the major highlight of the past year was our inspiring webinar series, "Black Lives on Screen," which featured a wide array of accomplished filmmakers, scholars and archivists (many from the University of Iowa). The result of a broad collaboration between faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates in the department and beyond, this series provided an extended opportunity for the university community to explore the immense range of African American cinematic art, from early to contemporary cinema, and from Hollywood blockbusters to experimental film and performance art. The department also hosted and co-sponsored several other events this year, including another successful instalment of the IC-Docs Festival (the 18th), a conversation with Dan Levy, and a panel on the state of diversity in media industries with Iowa Alumni from PBS News Hour, Disney, the Cashmere Agency, and The House That Casting Built.

Next year will see us transitioning back to in-person teaching and (starting in spring 2022) in-person events. We are already hard at work creating a vibrant event series for the coming academic year, including guest scholars, filmmakers and screenwriters, as well as a celebration for our esteemed colleague (and former chair), Professor Steven Ungar. Please keep an eye on the "events" page of our website for a list of speakers and dates as they develop.

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Excerpts from Black Lives on Screen, Cinematic Arts' Online Screening Series

Jennifer New (Obermann Center)

BLACK LIVES ON SCREEN

This spring semester, the Department of Cinematic Arts is hosting an online screening series, Black Lives on Screen, featuring the work of a diverse range of acclaimed African American and Black filmmakers, artists, and scholars. Intended to promote and celebrate the rich history and future of Black cinematic expression, the events will give UI classes, as well as individual students, staff, and faculty the opportunity to experience films ranging from the birth of cinema to the most recent documentaries, experimental shorts to mainstream blockbusters, and classic to marginalized or lost films. The idea for the series emerged organically from the department's commitment to transforming our 'Statement of Solidarity,' written over the summer in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, into action-based initiatives to combat racism through education," says Paula Amad, Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Cinematic Arts.

"As a department defined by the study and creation of film—an art form which we all know plays a profound role in reproducing as well as challenging racism—we felt a specific duty to focus our energies this year on providing a platform for leading artistic and scholarly voices in Black cinema."

She notes that Cinematic Arts established the Diverse Screens initiative last year with the goal of mobilizing cinema to make positive change in society. The new Black Lives on Screen series is a more urgent response and takes into consideration the ways in which cameras—particularly phone cameras documenting the deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans—have played a key role in helping the country as a whole witness police brutality. "Moving images are intertwined traumatically with the production and memory of those violent events," says Amad. The series is also a response to the way that the pandemic has closed theaters as a communal space for sharing art and ideas.

The Black Lives on Screen series is the inaugural, semester-long event of the Department's multi-year Diverse Screens initiative, a cornerstone of the unit's reinvigorated commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as articulated in its Strategic Plan. The intention is to broaden the scope to Black cinema in a diasporic and transnational context with events that will include, for example, the Obermann Humanities Symposium on contemporary Afro-Brazilian cinema planned for 2022–23.

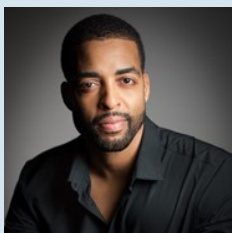
By shining a light on Black filmmakers' own multifaceted cinematic visions, voices, and stories, the series aims to expand the University of Iowa's cinematic horizons and broaden expectations of cinema as a key form of Black art and social transformation. Planned as an outward-facing event for the entire University of Iowa community, Cinematic Arts is collaborating with multiple units, faculty and students across campus, and FilmScene. The Obermann Center is especially pleased to co-sponsor and co-host the the culminating event of the series, the world premiere of UI Writers' Workshop professor Tracie Morris's poetic-cinematic performance "Black Spring."

The films in the series have been curated by UI faculty and graduate students, as well as by special guest artists and scholars. A few highlights include the acclaimed experimental films of our colleague and Obermann Advisory Board member Christopher Harris (Cinematic Arts, CLAS); lectures by two of the leading scholars of African American cinema, Allyson Field (University of Chicago) and Racquel Gates (College of Staten Island, CUNY; pictured left); experimental films recently curated by for the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City; and a program of African American home movies curated by preservationist Ina Archer from the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

"We have strived to include something for everyone, from film history buffs and superhero fans to art house cinephiles," says Amad. "As a film historian with a particular interest in cinema's marginalia, I am obviously eager to learn from Professor Allyson Field's lecture on the rediscovered 1898 film *Something Good—Negro Kiss*. I'm also super interested in a program that only recently came together in which African American home movies from the National Museum of African American History and Culture will be discussed by Associate Professor Racquel Gates and curator-filmmaker Ina Archer."

Master Class with Rashaad Ernesto Green

Jaren Nelson (Sophomore, Communications Studies and Screenwriting)



Cage, *Supernatural*, and *The Vampire Diaries*.

A great opportunity was presented to all Cinematic Arts and Screenwriting students on the afternoon of April 2nd. Rashaad Ernesto Green, director and co-writer of the film *Premature*, was available as a special guest in a Zoom Master class session. Green is also known for his work as a director for specific episodes of television such as *Luke*

The night before the Master class, students were invited to join a screening of *Premature*. Green was able to answer student and faculty questions concerning any of his experiences or work then on April 2nd.

I considered the open discussion to be an absolute eye-opener. Green was quick to explain how he had studied at New York University, and how he stepped into the film industry as an actor before anything else.

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Merritt Tierce Discusses Writing, the Industry, and “Floundering” with Screenwriting Classes

Ashley Cimarolli (Freshman, Cinematic Arts and Screenwriting)

On April 27th, novelist and screenwriter Merritt Tierce came to visit my Foundations of Screenwriting class and gave us insight into her life and journey as a writer. She is most known for her role as a screenwriter for *Orange Is the New Black* but never expected to end up there. She always knew she was creative and wanted to write but had no clue which direction to go in. Tierce discussed how her autobiography and work at an abortion clinic inspired a new TV series she's currently working on. As first and second-year students, it was inspiring to hear that she had such humble beginnings.

Tierce really impacted the way I think about writing as a whole and not just screenwriting. She got her foot in the door by writing her autobiography and then became a screenwriter. She emphasized how important it is to be able to just tell a story. Formatting can be taught but writing a beautiful story cannot be. That outlook inspired me to expand my knowledge about writing and take more creative writing classes rather than just screenwriting.

We all got a helpful insight into writing as a professional and the collaboration process. We learned about the pitch to the production process. She shared the thrill of seeing amazing actors execute her words during production and how they add their own flavor to them. I also enjoyed hearing about how the creators of *Orange Is the New Black* make a series: the beginning is almost all collaboration, but then everyone branches off to write various episodes. The feeling in the room was very candid as Tierce was not afraid to share her struggles and difficulties in the industry. She explained how when things do not end up how you imagined on set, it can be awkward or embarrassing. She also said how taxing and tiring writing gets. I have certainly noticed how just writing a few pages a day can knock me clean out. It was great to hear some roses and thorns, if you will, about professional writing, so thank you greatly for your candor, Merritt Tierce.

Based on Tierce's use of the word, I think of “floundering” as being productive while uncertain. After writing her book, Tierce said her favorite way to flounder was to go to her favorite artist residencies and work on projects. She was unclear where her path as a writer would go, so she floundered! This term resonated with me because I have been floundering for the past two years, simply trying to decide what on Earth I am doing for my career. Floundering eventually got Tierce the job as a screenwriter, so there are definitely worse things to do.



Students were eager to ask Tierce questions, and I think I speak for everyone when I say I have a much better idea of how the industry works and am grateful for all the information. She left us with advice about breaking into the industry and developing our craft as a writer. The advice that stuck with me the most is to be kind and do not burn any bridges. It is all about who you know. As a writer, especially during a pitch, you are somewhat selling yourself to the networks, so you must lead with enthusiasm. This guidance gives me hope that if I try to be fun, fresh, and friendly, I might just have a bright career ahead of me.



The 18th Annual Iowa City International Documentary Film Festival (ICDOCS) was successfully live-streamed from April 29-May 2, with the opening screening live at the IMU Amphitheatre. Festival Director and Department of Cinematic Arts Lecturer of Film & Video Production at the University of Iowa, Nellie Kluz and third year MFA student Stephen Wardell worked together to create the festival online, which, like last year's program, saw a significant increase in international online audiences and over 600 submissions.

For more information on the jurors and festival schedule, please see this [article](#) featured in the Daily Iowan. For winners and a full list of the programming, please visit the [ICDOCS website](#).

Black Lives on Screen Finale: Tracie Morris's "Black Spring"

Jennifer New (Obermann Center)

As the culminating event in the Black Lives on Screen series that has spanned the spring semester, Tracie Morris (Iowa Writers' Workshop) is presenting a short filmic work with performance voice-over. *Black Spring* (in 5 parts) is cultural theory, cinema, poetry, protest art, and elegy. Like much of Morris's work, it is a hybrid that is not easily categorized.

Morris is a poet who does not readily appear to be a poet. She is a writer who sings. She is a spoken word artist who makes movies. She is an improviser who performs research in archives. For those who like categories, Morris resists them. To her, it's all poetry. She invites us to move beyond the obvious and to ask instead, What is poetry?

A faculty member in poetry at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Morris lists herself variously as a "writer/editor of several books, poet, professor, performer, voice teacher and theorist." She was recently named a Guggenheim Fellow in the category of poetry.

(In fact, Morris is among three artist-scholars to present as part of the Black Lives series to win a Guggenheim this spring.) During her early career, she worked in film and video production—an area she considered pursuing—but found success with spoken word performance and moved in a more literary direction. Now, she's recognized for her sound poetry, a form that bridges experimental literature, musical composition, and performance art.

Although Morris is a generous listener, one senses that attention to categorization is of little interest to her. She told one interviewer that all of her work is poetry: "It's not, 'I'm a poet and I do these other things.' It's, 'I'm a poet; therefore, I do these other things.' I think and feel like a poet does. Then I apply my ideas about poetry to different things. I apply it to scholarship, voice, song, and even the way I support nonprofit artwork as a volunteer and advocate. I consider all of it an aspect of my poetic self."

Returning to her early love of cinema, she has increasingly been combining her words with moving images. Since joining the Iowa Writers' Workshop, first as a Distinguished Visiting Professor and now as permanent faculty, she has premiered three works at Iowa City's FilmScene (which Morris calls her "art cinema home"). She has interpreted Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence*, and Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*. For each of these performances, the original film plays in its entirety as Morris provides a live recontextualization, offering commentary as Black characters looking upon and inserting themselves into the films. Her exposition questions how gender, sexuality, and race are portrayed in the films. Morris refers to this series of her work as "not Neo-Benshi"—Neo-Benshi being the artistic practice of producing live alternate voice-overs for films.

For the third of her FilmScene performances, *Daughters, Mothers, Us*, Morris also threaded memoir into her commentary. In 1989, she was a production assistant ("a glorified gopher") on Dash's groundbreaking *Daughters of the Dust*, which was filmed in the Gullah Sea Islands. Now, from thirty-odd years out, Morris was able to consider the hierarchy of a film set and the personal complexities occurring behind the camera. Performed only once, just before campus and cinemas closed down due to COVID-19, it was Morris's final public event.

During that last year, Morris has quarantined closer to her family in Brooklyn. For someone accustomed to a great deal of travel, it has been an inward period, all the more so because health concerns made it impossible for her to participate in the street protests that occurred last summer following the murder of George Floyd.

Now, she is ready to provide input and reactions about those events. *Black Spring* (in 5 parts) will premiere on May 6 at 7:00 p.m. Appear in nearly a year after Floyd's murder, Morris says, "This is my first performative foray since that event. When this commission came up, I saw it as a chance to say something helpful. And it has a different texture now since the jury's decision."

Despite her disappointment of not being actively involved with what she calls "the most recent release of energy by marching in the streets," she says, "I wanted to contribute to the movement, to contextualize it." Unlike her other film projects, *Black Spring* does not use a single, seminal piece of cinema. Rather, Morris worked with two former UI students to pull and organize footage and still images, over which she then placed audio.

The piece is inspired in part by the importance that documentary footage via cell phone and bystanders has played in the recent understanding of violent events, especially actions by the police against Brown and Black citizens. "If there wasn't a dedicated American citizen recording George Floyd's murder, we might never have known about it," she says of the video taken by then-seventeen-year-old Darnella Frazier, who spoke during the trial about how deeply affected she remains by witnessing Floyd's murder. Morris adds that although Officer Derek Chauvin was convicted, "It's not a victory, because someone was lynched and one member of that lynching mob is going to prison. George Floyd's life was still lost."

Morris is aware of the traumatic power that images hold and says she is trying to be mindful of Black trauma in her selections of raw footage: "I don't want us to be re-traumatized together." She has chosen imagery that is referential and that, she hopes, will contextualize what has occurred in a larger framework. (The above image is a still from *Black Spring*, courtesy of Morris.) "For younger people, it's such a devastating experience," she says of violence against Black bodies; she wants to help them consider, "How did we get to here, and where do we go from here?"

Morris's involvement in the Black Lives on Screen series came about in part through her UI colleague Christopher Harris, a filmmaker and faculty member in Cinematic Arts who is part of the team planning the series. Harris says that to him, Morris's cinema-based work is "equal parts film criticism, poetry, and performance. They are always at each moment all of those things for me." He notes that although the works are very well planned and researched (Morris spent time in Kubrick's archives, for example), they also have an immediateness to them and an improvisational quality. *(continued on next page)*



Out of necessity, *Black Spring* will be screened virtually, though Morris hopes to eventually see it on the big screen. She values interaction with audiences, so she's never been keen on recordings of her live performances. She says *Black Spring* may actually be the first of her poems that she sees having a life away from her. She whimsically says of the work, which could be categorized in multiple ways, "I can see this poem walking into places; it doesn't look like me, it looks like itself. I'm giving birth to this child speaking in motion pictures and it's going off on its own."

p.3 cont'd

During his time at school, however, he had developed an idea for a short film. This idea would later turn into *Premature*, which would then be capitalized into a feature film eleven years later. Having the background of an aspiring actor allowed Green to turn his film into a physical reality. That "grind and hustle" as he put it of sending headshots and performance times to contacts formed the same sense of drive into his directing and writing. He was constantly contacting film festivals, receiving fee waivers, and broadening his network through that same ambitious mindset.

His best advice, albeit very simple, was something that many of us students need to be reminded of. As a writer or filmmaker, one must simply put themselves out there. Green recalled himself thinking, "I'm going to be rejected. That's life. But if my film can be accepted by one of these ten festivals, it will open a door for me that I couldn't open before."

His career was able to heighten because of his willingness to sacrifice the time and money to do so. It was not cheap. Green claimed to have spent around twelve thousand dollars alone for the creation of the *Premature* short. He would locate film festivals and plan out two-to-three-week scheduled trips to attend as many as he could. Those festivals allowed him to network even further, and to continue to push his film and ideas out into the world. The step of "putting himself out there" was necessary to Green. It was extremely important to him that his story was known and recognized by other human beings.

Green also shared with the group some of his techniques as a writer and director. He does usually write every single day, but rather keeps a journal log to reference ideas and thoughts every day. Even though his stressed message to share one's work, he does believe a story or idea can be seen by too many eyes. What he explained was that the more people that give their input, the more one will be likely to be driven away from their original intentions of their own story. Green does advise to get feedback and clarifications from trusted peers and sources.

Green offered various insights on the beginnings of a potential career in film. While the work was clarified as challenging, time consuming, and expensive, it was also a new form of inspiration for me. He put my goals as a writer into a perspective that illustrates a can-do mentality. My aspirations may not directly align with his own work, but it was a great opportunity to hear from someone who has found real success in a challenging field.



Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

- **Brandon Paquin** will be pursuing a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) at Ohio State beginning this fall.
- CA student **Brandon Kessel** landed a role as camera operator for 2 years with the Chicago White Sox. Congratulations, Brandon!
- Congratulations to **Kyleigh Davis**, who has accepted admission to Boston University and will begin pursuing her masters in Film and Television Studies this fall!



This year's **Michael D. Harmeyer Scholarship** saw a record number of submissions in original screenplays, short films, and excerpts of critical film papers. The scholarship was established in 2014 by Charles and Cecelia Harmeyer in honor of their son, Michael D. Harmeyer. Michael graduated from the University of Iowa in 2010 with a major in communication studies and a minor in cinema. After graduation, Michael moved to New York City to pursue a career in screenwriting. For 2021, the Harmeyer Scholarship is being awarded to two outstanding undergraduate students: **Hunter Andresen** and **Kayla Blaeser**.

Hunter Andresen's "ART in Motion" (above) is a moving and thoughtful meditation on world-building and creative authorship. The animated protagonist's journey through a live-action background perfectly complements the film's rumination on the ephemerality of life and the immortality of art: *ars gratia artis!*

Kayla Blaeser's excerpt of her feature-length film, "From a Song on a Minor Third," is an engaging exploration of friendship, passion, and dreams deferred. Kayla describes the premise: "Gianna and MJ reunite ten years after middle school graduation and discover that neither of them are leading the lives they had expected. Gianna has left the world of violin behind to become a doctor, and MJ has become a multi-platinum singer despite his family's reputation. However, are they happy with the ways things have turned out? With the help of each other and their friends, MJ and Gianna navigate their internal and external obstacles in an attempt to find their own happy endings."

Thank you to all who submitted their work to be considered for this year's Harmeyer! We are so proud of our talented and innovative students and look forward to seeing your work next year.

Graduate Student Accomplishments

Film Studies

- **Ben Dulavitch** passed his comprehensive exams in Fall, held a dissertation prospectus meeting this Spring, and will work on his dissertation with the support of a Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship next Fall.
- **Matthew Hipps** presented on theme parks and spectatorship at the 16th Annual Graduate Student Cinema and Media Conference at the University of Chicago in April.
- **Tom Jackson** presented on Alain Resnais and the animated documentary at the 2021 SCMS conference, and his full essay on the topic was published in *Film Criticism* last Fall.
- **Jonathan Lack** completed his comprehensive exams early this semester, and has received a Stanley Summer Scholarship for Asian Language Study to support his intensive study of Japanese at Beloit College this summer. Last summer, he held an Obermann Center Humanities for the Public Good Internship which resulted in an audio documentary for Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development. He also presented on Ozu at the 2021 SCMS conference, and gave two guest lectures for the University of Colorado at Boulder, on the Bob Dylan documentary *Don't Look Back* in Fall, and on *Black Panther* this Spring.
- **Chris Wei** presented on necromantic ventriloquism at the 23rd Annual Film Studies Association of Canada Graduate Colloquium in January, and was awarded an Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from the Council on Teaching for his work teaching Rhetoric and tutoring in the Writing Center.

Film & Video Production

- **Rachel Lazar** is the recipient of the Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Fellowship from University of Iowa and with its support she will work on Popgun Sonatas, an interdisciplinary project about Lydia Tomkiw, the poet and frontwoman of the 1980s Chicago band Algebra Suicide. Along with that she is working on parallel project, a short film about the history of graphology, with a focus on the archives of New York graphoanalyst and teacher Felix Klein; as well as a feature-length screenplay about Jewish conversion which she finished the first draft for.
- **Trevon Coleman** recently completed the written and oral comps exams successfully and is working on multiple projects ranging from installations to experimental documentary and narrative short pieces. Trevon's works as maker and cinematographer have shown in different venues and programs including Walker Art Center, Resisting Narratives of Erasure, Visionary Justice Storylab and ACDA Screendance Festival and most recently selected for the Onion City. Trevon has served as the executive director of Bijou Film Board and was also a participant at BlackStar's William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar in 2021 among other services and activities as Graduate Liaison.
- **Hao Zhou** just completed the written and oral comps exams successfully and has been working on multiple projects including his latest feature film Bridled, a photography series project, a feature-length screenplay as well as different short pieces. Hao is the recipient of the Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Fellowship from University of Iowa, a finalist in Tribeca Film Institute as well as Point Foundation different contests. Hao got into the prestigious Berlinale Talents in 2021, and is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including Prism Foundation Scholarship, Next Masters Support Program from Talents Tokyo, Stanley Award for International Research and Research Grant from Graduate & Professional Student Government at UofI. Hao was a committee member for UI Division of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's capital project planning among other services and activities.
- **Stephen Wardell** is in the process of completing his thesis project this summer after receiving the COVID Relief fellowship. Stephen has shown his past works in different festivals including Ann Arbor Film Festival, Vision Du Reel in Switzerland, Athens (next fall), Chicago Underground, Milwaukee Underground and Mimesis Doc festival. He got the Emerging Artist Award from Mimesis Documentary film festival and has been invited to participate in the Opening Scene Lab at Vision Du Reel in Switzerland. Stephen served as programming director for ICDOCS.
- **Julianna Villarosa** is in the process of completing her thesis project Green Desert this summer after receiving the COVID Relief fellowship. Julianna has shown her films in different programs and venues including Corner Theater in Busan, Korea, Walker Art Center; also her work has been a Vimeo staff pick. She served as Programmer of the Experimental Category for Slamdance Film Festival. Review of her works have appeared on different sites including Hundred Heroines, Women and Hollywood and The Morning News.
- **Auden Lincoln-Vogel** successfully finished his thesis defense and will be graduating soon. He has shown his works in different festivals including Cleveland International Film Festival, Taichung International Animation Festival from which he received International Animation Competition award, and Filmfest Dresden from which he received the grand prix award. His finished works are lined up for upcoming festival programs. Auden's animation work was published in a digital literary magazine named TriQuarterly Review.

Faculty Accomplishments

- **Paula Amad** finished up her service as chair, and continues to work on her book on Cin-Aereality. She published an article Modernism/Modernity: "'The World's Heavy Gaze': Recovering Cin-aereality in the Post-War Avant-Gardes" (April 2020) and published a chapter titled "Experimental Cosmopolitanism: The Limits of Autour du Monde-ism in the Kahn Archive," in *The Cosmopolitics of the Camera: Albert Kahn's Archives of the Planet* (2020).
- **Alessandra Bautze** has been working with a student at The University of Texas to create a production budget and financing plan for her independent feature screenplay Saving Shenandoah. She is also in the early stages of a collaboration with Deaf filmmaker Maleni Chaitoo to develop a sitcom that will reflect the diversity of the Deaf community. Maleni Chaitoo will also be a guest speaker in her upcoming summer course, Writing the Web Series as Personal Storytelling, offered through Baltimore Youth Film Arts, an affiliate program of Johns Hopkins.
- **Michael Cowan** submitted proposal for book titled: *The Social Life of Cinema: Towards an Archaeology of Film Societies in the German-Speaking World 1910-1933*. He also published a chapter titled: "Public Advertising Screens and the Ambivalence of Interactivity," *Grenzenlose Werbung – zwischen Konsum und Audiovision*, ed. Karin Moser, Franz Eder and Mario Keller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

Faculty Accomplishments (continued)

- **Corey Creekmur** was awarded a Professional Development Award for spring 2022, Continues to serve as General Editor of the Comics Culture” series for Rutgers University Press. (several books from the series have won awards.). Corey also published two chapters, including A chapter in Handbook of Comics and Graphic Narratives “George Herrmann: Krazy Kat” and a chapter in The Routledge Companion to Cyberpunk Culture called “American Flag! (Case Study)” He completed several presentations, including one at SCMS: “A Girl and A Gun: Barbara Stanwyck’s Westerns.”
- **Anahita Ghazvinizadeh**’s work has had several prominent international screenings, including: Cineforum, Critica e Cultura Cinematografica in Italy, Akademie der Künste in Berlin, and a program in Strasbourg titled Iraniennes en Courts: Projection de Court-Métrages de Réalisatrices Iraniennes. She also signed on as a screenwriter for a German-American feature-length co-production titled Stealing Paradise, and she has been commissioned as the speaker and contributing artist at The Museum of Fine Arts Houston Core Program’s Fall Salon in 2021, for which she will be producing work inspired by Persian miniatures and poetry.
- **Chris Goetz** continues to work on his book manuscript: The Counterfeit Coin: Videogames and Fantasies of Empowerment (under contract at Rutgers). He presented a paper at SCMS titled: “A Poetics of Scale in Cinema and Video Games” and Published a review in JCMS of Bonnie Ruberg’s book Video Games Have Always Been Queer.
- **Chris Harris** spent the year as a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard. He was Named F. Wendell Miller Associate Professor in Cinematic Arts: “in recognition of his outstanding work and his global reputation as a leading figure of experimental film and African American cinema.” His film Reckless Eyeballing screened through the month of March at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art as part of the Assembly of Images Film Series, on histories of Race and Representation.
- **Anna Morrison** published in journals such as The Adroit Journal, The Columbia Review, North American Review, and Brink Literary Journal. She also has a creative non-fiction essay forthcoming in PoetryNorthwest this summer. And her screenplay, Toothache, won Best Dramatic Screenplay in a national screenwriting competition.
- **Andy Owens**’s published his book: *Desire After Dark: Contemporary Queer Cultures and Occultly Marvelous Media*. He has another book in press on Marlon Riggs’ Tongues Untied, co-authored with Al Martin (for which they also received a research grant from the Obermann Center). Andy also published an article in the book New Queer Horror Film and Television, titled “If You Look in the Face of Evil, Evil’s Gonna Look Right Back at You’: Anthologizing Supernatural Sexualities on American Horror Story.”
- **Dan Singleton** has two articles coming out in edited collections: “Retro Reboots: The Influence of 50s Science-Fiction in Three Postmodern Video Games” and “The Scandal of Video Game Stardom” He is also expecting his first child in July.
- **Joel Wanek** produced the second season of the podcast Local Voices for the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. It featured reflection on works from the museum’s permanent collection by curators, community members, scholars, and artists. He participated in the eighth annual Réveil Festival. This is an international audio festival that relays the sounds of live microphones tracking the sunrise in multiple locations across the world, broadcast by 26 radio stations. Joel also broadcasted a live stereo feed from Lake Merritt in Oakland CA.

p.1 cont'd

We’re also particularly excited to welcome a new faculty member, Dr. Hayley O’Malley, who will join us in fall 2021 as Assistant Professor of Film Studies. A specialist in African American cinema and literature, Professor O’Malley is currently at work on her book *Dreams of a Black Cinema: The Filmic Turn in African American Literary Production*, which examines the little-known film and television work of such renowned authors as Maya Angelou, James Baldwin and Cathleen Collins.

When I interviewed for my current position in Cinematic Arts just over a year ago, I already knew the department’s reputation as a (if not *the*) pioneering university film department in the US. But one of the things that made me so excited to join Cinematic Arts is the vibrant work happening right now, as well as the unique culture of collaboration between scholars and artists that links this department to the larger “Iowa idea.” Given our relatively small size, our faculty’s work is astonishing for its sheer breadth, ranging from film history to contemporary global cinema, and encompassing work on 16mm film, new media, and screenwriting (among others). As I believe readers will see from the impressive list of faculty and student accomplishments below, our department continues to nurture a dynamic culture of film research and creation, which is at once spectacularly diverse and held together by a common passion for cinema and related screen media as agents that can help to shape how we think, feel and act.



Michael Cowan
Professor and Chair, Department of Cinematic Arts



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